

The Stanislaus Farm News

The *voice* of Stanislaus County Agriculture

STANISLAUS COUNTY



For the **good** of your **food**.



Official Publication of Stanislaus
County Farm Bureau
Vol.74 No.23 December 1, 2023

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pencil and you're a thousand miles
from the corn field."
- Dwight D. Eisenhower*

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To serve as the voice of Stanislaus County agriculture at all levels of government, while providing programs to assist its farms and family members and educate the general public of needs and importance to agriculture.



FRIDAY REVIEW

LEGISLATIVE AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY & FIRE PROTECTION (CAL FIRE)

\$170 MILLION AVAILABLE TO PROMOTE THRIVING FOREST ECOSYSTEMS
The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) is announcing the availability of up to \$120 million for Forest Health and \$50 million for Post-Fire Reforestation and Regeneration projects.

CAL FIRE is soliciting applications for projects that work to proactively prevent catastrophic wildfires and restore forests to healthy, functioning ecosystems while also sequestering carbon and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Applications will be accepted from November 13, 2023, and will be due by no later than 3:00 PM on January 15, 2024. Click here to apply.

The Forest Health Program funds active restoration and reforestation activities aimed at providing for more resilient and sustained forests. This ensures the future existence of forests in California while also mitigating climate change, protecting communities from fire risk, strengthening rural economies, and improving California's water and air. A virtual pre-recorded workshop will be made available to explain the grant process and requirements. Please check the Forest Health webpage to view the workshop. Any questions can be directed to ForestHealth@fire.ca.gov.

Projects that receive funding from the Forest Health grant program are designed to complement the California Forest Carbon Plan, California's Natural and Working Lands Implementation Plan, California's Wildfire & Forest Resilience Action Plan,

California's Strategic Plan for Expanding the Use of Beneficial Fire, and AB 32 Climate Change Scoping Plan. The Forest Health grant program is part of California Climate Investments, a statewide program that puts billions of cap-and-trade dollars to work reducing greenhouse gas emissions, strengthening the economy, and improving public health and the environment—particularly in disadvantaged communities.

OFFICE OF STATE FIRE MARSHALL (OSFM) APSA RULEMAKING
CAL FIRE-Office of the State Fire Marshall is responsible for ensuring the implementation of the Aboveground Petroleum Storage Act (APSA) program element of the Unified Program. The APSA provides technical and enforcement guidance for aboveground petroleum storage to reduce the risk of leaks and spills. The OSFM has announced APSA rulemaking to update APSA regulations to current building and safety standards.

Copies of the Notice of Proposed Action, Text of Proposed Regulations, Initial Statement of Reasons (ISOR), documents Incorporated by Reference in the text of proposed regulations, documents relied upon, and any other materials concerning this rulemaking can be accessed on the Office of the State Fire Marshal website at:

<https://osfm.fire.ca.gov/divisions/code-development-and-analysis/title-19-development/>

Public comments can be made in person at a hearing in January 2024:
The Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM)
January 19, 2024

9:00 am to 12:00 pm

CAL FIRE
710 Riverpoint Court, Suite 150
Conference Room 101
West Sacramento, CA 95605
or on the day of the hearing, join virtually: here Meeting ID: 240 154 319 261 Passcode: y2dfQe
Teleconference number- audio only +1 650-564-3271
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CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (CDFA) REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE
As interest in "regenerative agriculture" continues to grow, we are seeing the introduction and evolution of the term in California policies and programs.

The California State Board of Food and Agriculture, as advisory body to the Governor and CDFA Secretary, is positioned to advise on how the State's farmers, ranchers and consumers may be best served by agricultural policies in the state. Incorporating a definition of regenerative agriculture for state policies and programs provides a science-based criterion for the designation or recognition of the term "regenerative" in agriculture-related policies of the state. By defining "regenerative agriculture" and its associated practices, we are working to formalize holistic methods of farming that are designed to protect, sustain, and enhance natural resources on our farms and farming communities throughout California.

In October 2022, the State Board requested

See "REVIEW" on page 5

FREE ADS FOR FARM BUREAU MEMBERS

As another membership service, Farm Bureau members are offered FREE classified advertising in the Stanislaus Farm News. Ads must be 18 words or less and only one ad per month per membership (membership number required.) Ads may be MAILED to the Stanislaus Farm News, or BROUGHT to the SCFB office, 1201 L Street, Downtown Modesto. NO PHONE-IN OR FAX free ads will be accepted. Free ads are restricted to farm machinery or equipment or unprocessed farm products. Farm jobs wanted or offered will also be accepted. No real estate ads and no commercial items or services will be accepted. 209-522-7278

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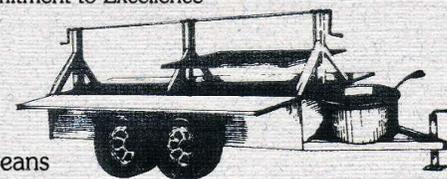
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From "REVIEW" on page 3

CDFA's Environmental Farming Act Science Advisory Panel (EFA SAP) to assist by conducting a review of existing definitions and literature to help determine common science-based practices related to "regenerative agriculture." In May 2023, the EFA SAP responded with a recommended framework.

The framework included the following characteristics. 1) Being applicable, relevant and useful for California agriculture; 2) Leading to positive impacts on California's environmental, social, human health and economic goals, including climate goals; 3) Providing measurable and verifiable outcomes, keeping in mind variability throughout the state, and emphasizing outcomes farmers and ranchers can easily measure and that are not economically burdensome to measure; 4) Allowing for context specific outcomes; 5) Soil health, including elements of physical quality, carbon sequestration, soil biodiversity, and alleviation of climate change as a foundational element.

The public listening sessions will help to inform the State Board's process, to help provide recommendations on a definition of "regenerative agriculture." Updates on

the public listening sessions and the process for defining "regenerative agriculture" are available at: <https://www.cdffa.ca.gov/RegenerativeAg/>

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PESTICIDES (DPR)

RESTRICTED MATERIAL PESTICIDES
The Department of Pesticide Regulation noticed a proposed regulation for a statewide system that will provide the public with information prior to intended applications of restricted material pesticides in California.

DPR's proposed regulation builds on the process in the state of California to regulate restricted material pesticides. Applicators must be licensed, obtain a permit, and provide notice to the county agricultural commissioner prior to applications of restricted material pesticides. The proposed regulation would require information about restricted material applications for the production of an agricultural commodity to be submitted electronically to DPR for public posting through a new statewide information system 24 hours prior to intended restricted material pesticide applications except for soil fumigant restricted materials, which would be posted 48 hours before an intended application.

The proposed regulation complements California's existing regulatory system that includes the evaluation and registration of pesticides before use, restrictions on pesticide use to reduce risk to people and the environment, and the enforcement of pesticide laws and regulations by DPR and the state's 55 county agricultural commissioners.

DPR is holding three public hearings on the regulation: Dec. 13 in Clovis, Dec. 14 in Ventura and Dec. 19 in a virtual setting. The department is additionally accepting written comments on the proposed regulation between Nov. 3, 2023, and Jan. 12, 24.

The proposed regulation follows a two-year period of outreach conducted by DPR to inform development of the statewide information system, including four focus groups and eight public meetings held between 2021-2022 and a series of pilot projects hosted by four counties to test elements of system design in 2022. The department is currently conducting beta testing to inform the ongoing development of the technology needed to support the statewide system. The department began system development in 2021 after the state's 2021-2022 budget allocated an initial \$10 million over four years for that purpose.

The draft regulation can be viewed on DPR's website.

Public Comment Period Open Nov. 3, 2023, through Jan. 12, 2024

SUSTAINABLE PEST MANAGEMENT
The California Farm Bureau's Chris Rear-don participated in tour on Thursday, November 16th with our partners at the Stanislaus County Farm Bureau. The focus was on the Department of Pesticide Regulation's (DPR) Sustainable Pest Management Proposal and was appreciative of Karen Morrison, DPR's Chief Deputy Director and staff for spending an afternoon with us discussing our concerns. Especially want to thank Daniel Bays, Jake Wenger, Anna Genasci and Tom Orvis for providing this opportunity to have frank and honest conversation on this important issue.

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Point Reyes dairy farmers fear for livelihoods amid legal battles over elk

In the 1960s, dairy farmers along the Marin County coast agreed to sell ranches to the federal government to facilitate creation of the Point Reyes National Seashore. That sales accord created a partnership enabling 27 working ranches to continue operating—scattered between public beaches, hiking trails, campgrounds and, later, a reserve for native tule elk. But now farmers say their livelihoods are threatened by lawsuits over the U.S. National Park Service’s management of ranching, as well by as a recent proposal by park officials to remove fencing that separates elk from livestock.

In nation’s artichoke capital, growing acreage is shrinking

California produces 97% of the nation’s fresh artichokes, and 75% of those are grown in Monterey County. The artichoke

is the county’s official vegetable, and tourists flock to restaurants and farm stands along the Artichoke Trail, which opened in 1957. Yet artichoke production on California’s Central Coast has steadily fallen over the past three decades. This is partly due to a transition from perennial artichoke plants to an annual or seeded variety in the 1990s, after a lengthy cold snap killed acres of perennial artichokes in the county.

Water year is off to a slow start, but high reservoir levels give farmers hope.

As California’s weather swings from droughts to floods, farmers say they are planning for either extreme but remain confident knowing the water supply in state reservoirs is well above the historical average for this time of year. The currently abundant surface water stored in reservoirs across the state is the result of an El Niño

weather pattern that brought soaking atmospheric river storms and flooding early this year. But since the 2024 water year began on Oct. 1, the state has received little precipitation and snow.

Dairy farmer reaches cattle exhibition ‘hall of fame’

After nearly 60 years of showing cattle, Tulare County dairy farmer Joey Airoso acknowledged he’s “pretty well known” in competition circles. Though he has taken home various prizes through the years, Airoso said he was “completely surprised” when he was named the 81st winner of the Klussendorf Award, widely regarded as the Hall of Fame for dairy cattle exhibitors. Airoso manages a family dairy in Pixley that milks 2,600 cows and grows 1,600 acres of alfalfa, corn, wheat and pistachios. His family also breeds and sells registered Holsteins and Jerseys.

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Apprenticeship program seeks to boost olive farming, olive oil production

A \$50,000 donation from the Cortopassi Family Foundation is supporting an apprenticeship program for students growing olives and producing olive oil. The Olea Learn program, administered by the Olive Center at the University of California, Davis, is also supported by olive farmers and producers. The program teaches students in field management, irrigation practices and pest control, while providing hands-on experience taking care of the olive trees at the Wolfskill Experimental Orchards in Winters.

University of California studies provide insights for Central Coast apple growers

University of California researchers have released two new studies to help Central

Coast growers estimate costs and potential returns for both organically and conventionally produced apples. The studies focus on processing apples, not fresh market apples. Apples grown for processing on the Central Coast are mostly pressed for juice and sparkling cider. The cost studies model a management scenario for a 100-acre farm, 20 acres of which are planted to a mature orchard that produces apples for processing.

State funding supports crop replacement, groundwater recharge

The California Department of Water Resources has awarded \$11.8 million in funding for two projects that promote agriculture and groundwater conservation in Southern California. The Rancho California Water District in Riverside County received funding from DWR's Urban Community Drought Relief Program. Some \$5 mil-

lion in funding will support an agriculture program, CropSWAP, which is converting 160 acres from water-intensive plants to drought-resilient crops. DWR also awarded \$6.8 million to build a 40-acre groundwater recharge pond.

With farmers getting older, USDA seeks to help young agriculturalists

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is spending nearly \$28 million to support organizations that teach and train beginning farmers and ranchers, including programs for U.S. veterans who are entering into agricultural careers and starting new farming businesses. The funding supports the National Institute of Food and Agriculture's Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program. The effort to support young agriculturalists comes as one-third of the 3.4 million U.S. farmers are over the age of 65.



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Opportunity is Knocking

Source: Terri Moore, Vice President, Communications, American Farm Bureau Federation

Did you hear the news? The Food and Drug Administration is on the cusp of approving a breakthrough in human health that may have profound implications for agriculture.

It's the first medical therapy that uses gene editing to treat a disease. It was successfully used to treat sickle cell disease and prevent the excruciating pain that sickle cell patients experience. It worked in 29 of 30 patients over 18 months, according to the FDA. The results were so convincing that a committee of independent FDA advisors – trained to be skeptical – reportedly praised the treatment, which opens the door for FDA approval.

So, what does this have to do with agriculture? Everything.

Gene editing is a method of selective breeding, a practice as old as our need to grow our own food. Farmers have always bred crops and animals to draw out traits that make them more wholesome and sustainable. Gene editing allows breeders to speed up nature's process by making changes to plants and animals more precisely than through conventional plant breeding methods. It can unlock tremendous benefits for consumers and the environment, helping farmers grow healthier, more sustainable food.

How is food made healthier by gene editing? It can remove allergens, reduce satu-

rated and trans fats, and enrich nutrients in popular crops and commodities, such as peanuts, eggs and wheat. For the environment, scientists use gene editing to breed crops resistant to disease, drought and insects, allowing farmers to reduce pesticide use and conserve water. On the animal health front, gene editing can eliminate the threat of diseases like PRRS (a devastating illness in pigs), create natural immunity to other diseases, and improve the overall health of livestock, reducing the need for antibiotics.



A great example of the benefits of gene editing in agriculture is the widely held be-

lief among scientists that gene editing is the solution to save a popular variety of bananas. Why? Because a deadly fungus is plaguing the crop. As a Nature.com article reports, gene editing might be the banana's only hope. Researchers are using the gene editing tool to boost the fruit's defenses and prevent its extinction. By the way, if you like oranges and orange juice, you might want to look into reports that gene editing may save the day to stop citrus greening, too, when no other solution exists.

Annual Convention 2024

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See "Opportunity" on page 14

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California Awards Nearly \$35 Million to Address Livestock Emissions

Source: Brian German
Ag News Director / AgNet West

Several projects to address livestock emissions in the state have received funding support from the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA). A total of nearly \$35 million has been awarded through CDFA's Office of Environmental Farming and Innovation and the California Dairy Research Foundation. Grants through the Alternative Manure Management Program (AMMP) totaling \$21.41 million have been awarded to 31 projects. Additionally, 12 projects under the Dairy Plus Program are receiving \$14.23 million.

"California has set ambitious climate goals, and agriculture is an important contributor to these achievements," CDFA Secretary

Karen Ross said in a press release. "Dairy farmers and livestock ranchers are putting effective new technologies and best practices to work in their barns and fields, and these projects keep that progress in motion."

AMMP and Dairy Plus act as incentives for implementing Climate Smart Agriculture practices. AMMP projects include practices such as solid separation, converting from flush to scrape, and establishing compost bedded pack barns. In total, the 31 AMMP projects will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 207,311 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents (MTCO₂e) over five years. Dairy Plus projects include vermifiltration, weeping walls, and advanced solid-liquid separation assisted by flocculants or bead filters. Collectively, the 12 Dairy Plus projects will reduce emissions by 296,353 MT-CO₂e over five years.

These initiatives aim to cut down greenhouse gas emissions from manure on California dairy and

livestock farms. At the same time, the projects are meant to enhance water quality and nutrient management. By implementing these practices, not only are overall livestock emissions reduced, but there are additional benefits like decreased odor and air pollutants.



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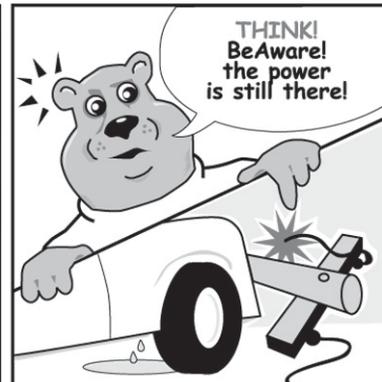
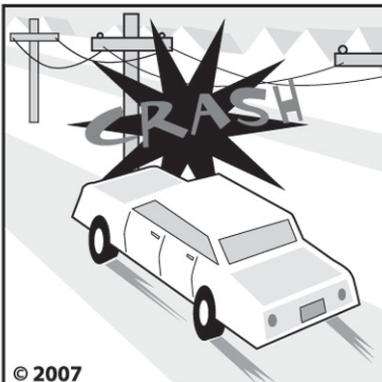
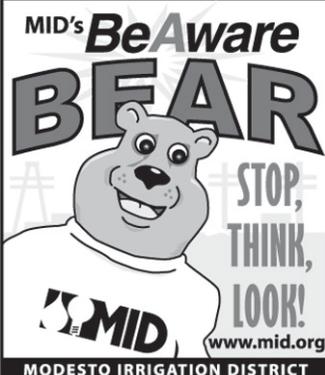
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The most recent grants bring the total number of AMMP-supported projects to 172. CDFA has also selected eight Dairy Plus projects alongside a new 2023 AMMP project and four Dairy Plus projects to advance past completed AMMP projects if they meet federal requirements.



REMEMBER to STOP, THINK, LOOK!
BeAware - The Power is there!

Let's talk about land

Because the future of your farmland matters most

The following information is provided by Nationwide®, the #1 farm and ranch insurer in the U.S.*

The farmland market is red-hot. Though such a bullish marketplace is a boon for landowners, it also changes the game for tenants who depend on rented land for a large share of their crop revenue. High prices make it even more important to make sure everyone involved has the right insurance coverage in place.

Complicating the equation for lessees is the recent rise in absentee farmland ownership. According to a USDA report**, around 40% of the land farmed in the U.S. is rented. Of that share, around 31% is owned by an absentee or non-operator, a number that continues to rise, especially as active farmers retire and sell land.

The combination of these trends creates year-over-year operational and managerial challenges for leasing farmers and their landowners. One of those is ensuring both parties are adequately managing the risk of a land lease for which the two parties may be thousands of miles apart.

Sharing insurance responsibilities
In most cases when a farmer rents land from an absentee landowner, risk management responsibilities are split between the two parties. Each lease should spell out who is responsible for different operational and

management responsibilities. And what is fair is not always equal.

For example, if adding improvements like tile drainage can boost the long-term productivity of a field, installation costs should be shared based on the equity it creates. If a lessee anticipates only renting the land for one year, he or she should not bear as much cost as the landowner, who will likely see greater value in the form of higher rents over time as a result of the improvement.

But if such improvements are part of a multiyear leasing strategy in which the lessee will remain in the picture, he or she will likely pay a larger share of the cost. In general, the duration of a lease often is a major contributor to how land improvement costs are spread between the landowner and renter.

See "Land" on page 13



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Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Mentorship Program



The program has been named “Expanding our Roots” and is dedicated to supporting newly emerging agriculturalists in California. More information on the program may be found here: (<https://www.cbf.com/california-bountiful-foundation/programs-and-services/beginning-farmer-and-rancher-mentorship-program>)

The grant was awarded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture. The funds will support the development and implementation of the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Mentoring program, which will partner with the California Farm Bureau Young Farmers & Ranchers organization.

“This was a very competitive grant solicitation process that the California Bountiful Foundation pursued, and it is one of many examples how the foundation is supporting farmers and ranchers as well as helping us build our agricultural future,”

said California Farm Bureau President Jamie Johansson.

The initiative will match 200 beginning farmers and ranchers with one to 10 years of experience with agricultural mentors who have worked in California farming and ranching for more than a decade. Mentoring will focus on topic areas including market access, climate challenges, navigating the regulatory system, pest management and the business aspects of farming and ranching.

Beginning agriculturalists receiving support under the program will include military veterans and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. Partners in the effort include the California Farm Bureau YF&R program, county Farm Bureaus, the Black Agriculture Working Group and the Farmer Veteran Coalition’s founder, Michael O’Gorman.

“We are excited to implement this program and for the opportunity to support begin-

ning farmers and ranchers who are critical to California’s agricultural future,” said Amrith Gunasekara, Ph.D., science and research director of the California Bountiful Foundation. “This effort will provide valuable experiences, training and opportunities for our young agriculturalists and mentor the next generation of leaders in America’s most productive farming state.”

The California Farm Bureau works to protect family farms and ranches on behalf of nearly 29,000 members statewide and as part of a nationwide network of 5.3 million Farm Bureau members.

USDA grant to support beginning farmer and rancher program

Source: California Farm Bureau

The California Bountiful Foundation, the 501(c)3 nonprofit science, research and educational organization of the California Farm Bureau, has received a \$574,750 grant to support the California Farm Bureau Beginning Farmer and Rancher Mentoring Program.

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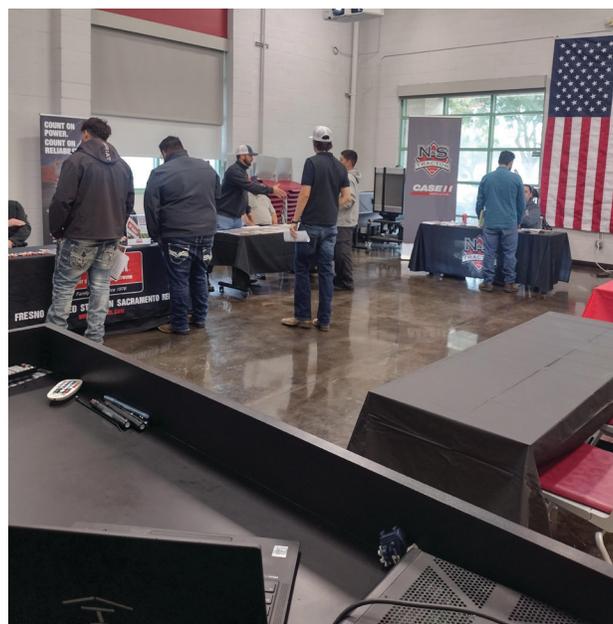
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Modesto JC's Ag department's A-SERT Apprenticeship held its first-ever Apprentice Hiring Expo. Companies that are affiliate members of the A-SERT Apprenticeship were invited to participate in this hiring expo, giving them a first look at this year's crop of Diesel Repair students and potential apprentices. Students from the MJC Heavy Equipment Repair program participated by having job search items (resume, application, etc) and participated in real-world interviews. Many students received offers and are expected to announce their acceptance soon.

By: Todd Conrado, Professor of Agriculture Power Mechanics, MJC



VISIT THE INCENTIVE AND GROWER SUPPORT ZONE!

The *Incentive and Grower Support Zone* is returning to The Almond Conference! This is **THE** place to learn about government incentives and other forms of support. Many of these incentive programs began as research projects with funding from the Almond Board of California with proven agronomic benefits.

Examples of available funding include:

- More efficient irrigation, distribution uniformity testing and nutrient management systems
- Groundwater recharge
- Cleaner on-farm equipment
- Low-dust harvesters
- Habitat projects including pollinator hedges
- Navel orangeworm mating disruption and integrated pest management
- Planning grants and many other practices

2023

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The tables with agency staff and program materials are located on Level 2 in the Ballroom A Foyer, right off the top of the escalators.



From "Land" on page 10

Think about how land is used. There are several factors that influence how farmland is insured. First, it's important to consider the basics of the property and its intended purpose. Some land is obviously for cropping. But grassland or pasture land may have multiple uses. All of a piece of land's intended uses should be accounted for in both the written lease as well as the chosen insurance coverage.

Coverage options also vary widely based on lease land's use. A basic homeowners policy rarely covers all of the operational

risk of leased farmland. Sometimes endorsements cover those specific risks, but in other cases, altogether different policies specifically designed for farmland are the best solutions.

Especially with an absentee leases, it's always a good idea to have regular meetings during which the lessee can update the landowner on all activities on the leased land and how they impact things like lease price and optimal insurance coverage options.

whether you're currently farming or new to owning or renting farmland – it's important to talk with your local Nationwide Farm Certified agent. Nationwide is the only farm insurance company that trains and certifies its agents. When you see that an agent is Nationwide On Your Side Farm Certified, you can be confident you've found a trusted, knowledgeable advisor.

Visit aginsightcenter.com/farmlandownership to download our free Farmland Ownership Protection Guide and to learn what we know about farmland.

Talk with your insurance agent. No matter how you're involved with farming –

*A.M. Best Market Share Report 2021.

** <https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/74672/eib-161.pdf?v=2462.1>

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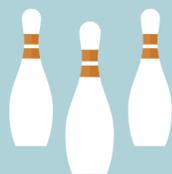
From "Opportunity" on page 8

cates have all been eager to welcome the advancements that gene-editing can bring.

That said, we've learned an important lesson about consumer acceptance. It doesn't matter how beneficial a particular technology might be if consumers don't trust it. Consumer skepticism is understandable. As a mom, I'm skeptical when anyone tells me what is or isn't good for me or my kids. Ready to connect the dots?

That's the beauty of the FDA research into the benefits of gene editing to human health.

Extensive consumer research shows that connecting the technology to human health benefits eases or eliminates concern about the technology's use in food. You can find a plethora of information on BestFoodFacts.org. It includes a great 3-part video series about the potential of gene editing. In part 2, we meet Shakir Cannon, who had battled sickle cell disease his entire life and was a passionate advocate for a gene editing tool called CRISPR to save lives. Sadly, Shakir passed away before we reached this moment when FDA is nearing approval of the technology. We can all honor Shakir's passion by advancing a greater understanding of the potential of gene editing to transform lives...and crops. Let's seize this moment.



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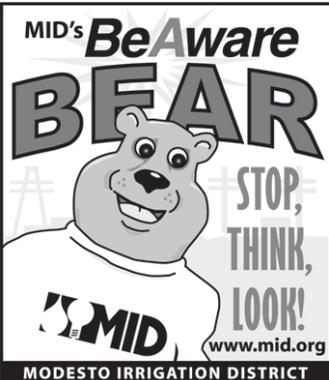
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